DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 164 464 SP 013 331

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TITLE Project POINT; An Innovative Program in Elementary Teacher Education.
INSTITUTION San Diego State Univ., Calif. School of Education.
PUB DATE 1 Nov 78
NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Elementary School Teachers; Higher Education; *Performance Based Teacher Education; *Preservice Education; *Program Descriptions; Program Development; Program Evaluation; Student Teachers; *Student Teaching; Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Seminars; *Teaching Skills

ABSTRACT

Project POINT is a four-semester program of professional courses and student teaching, available to prospective elementary teachers at San Diego State University. Designed as an ideal program by task forces of over 50 teachers, school administrators, university professors, and student teachers, it focuses on skills of teaching in addition to the more customary content of courses in educational foundations and teaching methodology. Each participant in the program is assigned to a carefully selected master teacher, and must complete a one-year assignment in a first school and third- and fourth-semester assignments in different schools at different grade levels. The student teaching experience totals over 1,400 clock hours in public school classrooms. University classes are taught on-site, in facilities provided by the cooperating school districts. A team of five university professors provides instruction in various skills areas, such as community study, child study, behavior management, intellectual assessment, diagnosis, classroom management, lesson planning, unit planning, individualizing instruction, applying principles of instruction, curriculum development, questioning, role playing, communication techniques, and classroom control. Students apply their new skills immediately in student teaching, where they receive corrective feedback. (Author/DS)

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ED164464

PROJECT POINT

An Innovative Program in Elementary Teacher Education

Submitted by

San Diego State University
College of Education
November 1, 1978

for consideration for

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Distinguished Achievement Award

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Part I

Summary of Project POINT

Summary

Project POINT is a four semester program of professional courses and student teaching, available to prospective elementary teachers at San Diego State University. Designed as an ideal program by task forces of over fifty teachers, school administrators, university professors, and student teachers, it focuses on skills of teaching in addition to the more customary content of courses in educational foundations and teaching methodology.

POINT immerses participants in student teaching for all four semesters. Assigned to carefully selected master teachers, the participants complete a one-year assignment in a first school. They have a second school and grade level assignment during their third semester, and yet another for their fourth semester. The first three semesters provide morning student teaching every day, plus a student teaching seminar once per week.

This student teaching experience totals over 1400 clock hours in public school classrooms.

University classes are taught on-site, in facilities provided by cooperating school districts. A team of five university professors provides instruction in various skills areas, such as community study, child study, behavior management, intellectual assessment, diagnosis, classroom management, lesson planning, unit planning, individualizing instruction, applying principles of instruction, curriculum development, questioning, role playing, communication techniques, and classroom control. Courses in methods of teaching developmental and remedial reading are included. The instruction is provided in laboratory fashion, made directly practical and applicable.

Students apply their learnings immediately in student teaching, where they receive corrective feedback. They also prepare case studies and numerous projects related to their laboratory experiences. The university instructional team, working in concert with the master teachers, supervises participants in student teaching.

Cooperating schools, principals, and master teachers are kept fully informed of student teachers' responsibilities, skills applications, and projects. They work hand in glove with POINT professors to make experiences maximally valuable to the participants.

POINT has participated closely with several different school districts in the greater San Diego area. Requests for POINT student teachers far outnumber the supply. Demand for POINT graduates is shown in their very high record of placement into teaching positions.

Part II

Explanation and Analysis of Project POINT

1. Project POINT in a Nutshell

POINT, an acronym that stands for Preparation, Orientation, and Induction of New Teachers, is the name of an innovative elementary teacher education program at San Diego State University. Its many goals include four that are especially noteworthy.

1. Varied, extensive, and intensive work with learners of different ages.
2. Assumption of responsible teaching roles in varied types of classroom organization -- open space, self contained, team teaching, etc. -- and in varied socioeconomic community areas.
3. Professional education course work that places emphasis on desired skills, attitudes, and experiences, rather than on the simple completion of specified courses.
4. An equal-partner role played by the school districts in which training experiences are provided.

To reach these goals, POINT students progress through a four semester program of interrelated course work and student teaching. They assume responsible teaching roles in three different schools, at three different grade levels. This student teaching experience totals over 1,400 clock hours in public school classrooms. The college education classes, taught by a team of college professors, stress teaching skills which the students apply and evaluate in student teaching. Those same professors supervise POINT students in student teaching. College classes are held in public school classrooms, and school district personnel including principals,

teachers, consultants, and support staff contribute to the overall development of POINT students.

POINT, now in its eighth year of operation, was planned by 55 professors, teachers, and administrators from the greater San Diego, California, area. It has operated in five large urban school districts, in a large number of different schools. Its graduates have been very successful in securing teaching positions, and there is a long waiting list of public schools wishing to participate in POINT.

2. Development of Project POINT

Project POINT, conceived in 1969, grew from the conviction that the School of Education at San Diego State University, working closely with participating school districts, could plan and implement a program of teacher education that would do two things -- incorporate newer thought in teacher education, and provide a significant alternative to existing programs.

This conviction was first voiced by a group of University and School District administrators. They enlisted the cooperation and support of groups of university education and academic professors, public school administrators, public school teachers, and student teachers. Those individuals, fifty-five in number, worked together for six three-day weekeneds in 1970-71 to plan what they considered to be an ideal program of elementary teacher education. They formed five task forces, each with its own particular charge, and those task forces created a new teacher education program that provided an experimental alternative to the existing program.

One task force concentrated on the academic education of participants, preparing a sequence of courses that would lead to a basic grasp of the knowledge, problems, and ways of answering questions that formed the underlying structures of subject areas taught in elementary schools.

A second task force put together a set of new education courses that emphasized the acquisition of functional teaching skills. Those skills were made directly applicable to student teaching, and participants had to demonstrate them; mere course completion would not suffice.

A third task force built a program of field work and student teaching, to provide a range of intensive experiences with different schools, levels, students, and classroom organizations.

A fourth task force concentrated on the development of techniques for supervising student teachers, that would improve the assistance provided by university supervisors and master teachers.

The fifth task force consisted of university and public school administrators. Their charge was to facilitate implementation of plans formulated by members of the other four task forces.

The efforts of those task forces results in Project POINT -- Preparation, Orientation, and Induction of New Teachers. POINT has an enrollment each year of between 50 and 60 participants. They progress through a four semester program of interrelated course work and student teaching. They assume responsible teaching roles in three different schools, at three different grade levels. The first three semesters involve morning field experience and student teaching. The fourth semester includes 13 weeks of

full day student teaching. This field experience and student teaching totals over 1,400 clock hours in public school classrooms.

The education classes, taught by a team of university professors, stress desirable attitudes and teaching skills that participants apply and evaluate in student teaching. Those professors also supervise POINT students in student teaching. The same schools and teachers serve during the entire four semester cycle. Professors and teachers plan together and share responsibility for the preparation of participants. Education classes are held in public schools, and school district personnel, including principals, teachers, consultants, and support staff assist in the overall development of POINT students. The districts involve POINT students in their in-service education programs and allow them full access to supplies and media centers, considering them full fledged professional colleagues.

3. Program Objectives, Courses, and Requirements

Semester 1

Classes: Community Study (2)

Child Study (2)

Classroom Management (2)

Professional Competency Areas:

Multiple Subjects Program Requirements

1. Legal foundations, responsibilities, and cautions in education and teaching.
2. Detailed observation of the community served by the school.
3. Assessment of the socio-cultural aspects of the school community.

4. Assessment techniques related to student learning, growth, and development.
5. Ability to use questioning strategies.

Additional POINT Competencies

6. Professionalism and personal professional identity.
7. Knowledge and implementation of behavior management strategies.
8. Skills and procedures of lesson planning.
9. Skills and procedures of classroom management.
10. The construction, use, and evaluation of classroom learning center.
11. Rationale, materials, procedures, and interpretation of intellectual assessment through Piagetian task analysis.
12. Knowledge and use of various discipline strategies and techniques.

Major Written Assignments:

1. Report: community and school study.
2. Report: child study, to include results of Piagetian assessment.
3. Report: behavior modification.
4. Report: learning center development and use.
5. Lesson plans showing the use of questioning strategies.

Semester 2

Classes: Reading Methods (2)
Applying Principles of Instruction (2)
Student Teaching (2)

Professional Competency Areas:

Multiple Subjects Program Requirements

1. Use criteria and models of effective teaching for self improvement.
2. Provide appropriate stimulation, guidance, materials, and learning environments for students.
3. Select, apply, and interpret appropriate devices and procedures for assessing student progress.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of and use discussion as a teaching technique.

Additional POINT Competencies

5. Use reading diagnosis and placement inventories.
6. Plan and teach various lessons related to the reading skills of word analysis, comprehension, study skills, and literature.
7. Plan and teach a complete reading program for the entire class.
8. Identify and explain the meaning and application of recognized principles of learning and teaching.
9. Identify and explain the use of at least five different methods and five different strategies of teaching: plan and practice the use of at least two of each.
10. Complete a systematic analysis of the verbal interaction that occurs in a selected teaching episode.
11. Acquire and implement techniques for enhancing success in student teaching.
12. Make and use games, materials, and activities for teaching various subject areas.

Major Written Assignments:

1. Report: on the implementation of the student-developed reading program.

2. Report: on the application of instructional principles, methods, and strategies.
3. Report: on the analysis of verbal interaction.

Semester 3

Classes: Critical Thinking (2)
Curriculum Organization (2)
Student Teaching (3)

Professional Competency Areas:

Multiple Subjects Program Requirements

1. Select and design instructional programs to provide optimal growth for individual students.
2. Select and implement a variety of instructional materials.
3. Formulate usable objectives and compose instructional plans for short, medium, and long range learning segments.
4. Develop and use critical thinking strategies for students.
5. Develop ability to deal with controversial and sensitive topics in the classroom.
6. Organize subject matter into segments consonant with student needs.
7. Select subject matter based on recognized principles of instruction.

Additional POINT Competencies

8. Acquire and apply skills in values clarification.
9. Acquire and apply skills in teaching divergent and creative thinking.
10. Know and use a variety of inquiry strategies in working with students.
11. Develop and apply enabling, en route, and terminal objectives in planning instruction.

12. Develop skills of teaching through pantomime, creative dramatics, role playing, simulations, and choric verse.
13. Acquire knowledge of, develop, and apply various techniques of individualizing instruction.

Major Written Assignments:

1. Report: on the preparation, use, and results of long range instructional plans.
2. Report: on the preparation, use, and results of a program using individualized instruction.
3. Report: on the implementation of values clarification and critical, problem solving, and creative thinking skills.

Semester 4

Classes: Remedial Reading (1)
Student Teaching (8)
Student Teaching Seminar (3)

Professional Competency Areas:

Multiple Subjects Program Requirements

1. Explain the rationale, organization, and implementation of various types of classroom organization.
2. Demonstrate the teacher's role in using several different modes of instruction.

Additional POINT Competencies

3. Identify and plan for students needing remedial instruction, with emphasis on assessment and follow through.
4. Analyze and practice various methods of class control.
5. Analyze the nature, advantages, and disadvantages of various methods and strategies of teaching, styles of learning, and classroom organization.
6. Prepare for and practice job interview techniques.
7. Prepare professional resumes.
8. Prepare professional dossiers.
9. Implementation of job search procedures: applications, interviews, follow-up.

Major Written Assignment:

Report on implementation of remedial program.

4. Personnel Involved

Director: Dr. C. M. Charles, Professor of Elementary Education, San Diego State University.

Planners: The initial planning for POINT was done by 55 educators, including University deans, superintendents and associate superintendents of 7 large school districts, university professors in education and academic areas, beginning and experienced school teachers, and university student teachers.

Planning continues on an on-going basis by the POINT staff, in collaboration with the Elementary Department chairman and the department curriculum committee.

Students: To date, POINT has enrolled 8 cycles of students. The first 6 cycles have graduated. The 7th and 8th cycles are presently in training.

Professors: The POINT instructional staff includes:

Houston M. Burnside, PhD, Professor

C. M. Charles, PhD, Professor

David K. Gast, EdD, Professor

Joanne Harris, M.A., Instructor

Richard E. Servey, PhD, Professor

In addition, 8 university academic professors have taught classes especially for POINT.

University Support Personnel: Since POINT is an integral part of the teacher education program at San Diego State University, it utilizes the regular administrative, instructional, and clerical personnel of the College of Education.

Master Teachers: To date approximately 150 classroom teachers, grades K through 8, in approximately 50 schools in 5 different school districts have served as master teachers for POINT field experience and student teaching.

School District Support Personnel: Principals, secretaries, and custodial staffs in schools participating in POINT provide much assistance to the program. They identify with the Project, play important roles in its many activities, and take justifiable pride in its accomplishments.

Resource Personnel: Participating school districts provide most of the resource personnel used in POINT instruction. Several dozen principals, personnel directors, curriculum directors, teachers, librarians, nurses, psychologists, school attorneys, and others have made presentations to POINT classes.

Increasingly, POINT is able to take advantage of POINT graduates to work with classes. They have proved exceptionally valuable to the program.

5. Budget

While the planning phase was funded by an EPDA grant, Project POINT requires no special operating budget and has had none since 1971. It is an integral part of the teacher education program at San Diego State University and is supported by regular university funds.

6. Contributions to the Improvement of Teacher Education

POINT has contributed significantly to the improvement of teacher education both internally at San Diego State University and externally in California and elsewhere.

Internally POINT has contributed in two major ways. The first is in the high quality program it, itself, has provided for the past 7 years. Large numbers of students have taken advantage of the program and have gone on to teaching and administrative positions where they have performed with distinction.

POINT's second major internal contribution has been the effect it has had on the elementary education department as a whole. Its tested organization and procedures have provided stimulation, guidance, and models for the development of new approaches in the preparation of elementary teachers. At San Diego State University POINT has been the prototype for:

- -- A skills-oriented teacher education program.
- -- A "center" approach, conducted cooperatively by districts and the university.
- -- A program whose professional component is entirely field based.
- -- Team instruction by professors for the entire program cycle.
- -- A four semester sequence of field experience and student teaching.
- -- Education skills instruction directly related to student teaching.
- -- Significant responsibility and resource input by school districts.
- -- Provisions of gratis in-service training for cooperating master teachers.

-- Provision of media fairs and workshops for school district personnel and student teachers.

Each one of these thrusts has stimulated related efforts by other professors in the school of education, and subsequent dissemination has offered similar stimulation to other institutions as well.

Externally, POINT has begun influencing teacher education on a broader scope. Three of the most notable examples of this influence are conference presentations, media fairs and publications.

Conferences. POINT made major presentations at conferences of California educators in 1976 and 1978. The 1976 presentation was made before the California Association of Professors of Elementary Education in Fullerton, California. Fifteen POINT students and two professors described the program and displayed samples of student work.

The 1978 presentation was made before the California Council on the Education of Teachers, held in San Diego. Two students and two professors described the program, demonstrated materials, and conducted discussions about POINT.

Both of these presentations drew much attention, comment, praise, and later contact from professors in Southern California.

Media Fairs. Each year Project POINT presents a large media fair open to the public. Held in public school auditoriums, the fair attracts hundreds of teachers, student teachers, administrators, parents, and children. The fair displays remarkable examples of media developed by POINT students. Included are learning centers, instructional units, instructional games, and art activities. Also displayed are sample child and community studies,

slide tape presentations, original musical scores and dramas, and samples of children's work that resulted from efforts of POINT student teachers.

The fair is held on a Friday and Saturday near the end of the fall semester. Some principals have released teachers on Friday afternoon to attend. Activities associated with the fair have been available for University extension credit.

These fairs have drawn much attention to POINT in the greater San Diego area, and they have provided stimulation to area teachers, student teachers, and administrators.

Publications. POINT students in cycles 5, 6, and 7 have produced valuable instructional materials for wide dissemination to teachers, administrators, and student teachers.

The first was LEARNING CENTERS THAT TEACH (authored by The POINT Associates, published by University Press of America, Washington, D.C.: 1977). This publication is available nationwide and is one of the best books available on the construction and use of classroom learning centers.

The second was CONTENT UNITS FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHING, authored and published by The POINT Associates, San Diego State University.

The third, in progress, is tentatively entitled BULLETIN BOARDS THAT TEACH. It will describe the composition, contents, and utilization of bulletin boards that have high instructional value rather than mere decorative value.

These internal and external contributions have earned growing attention to and respect for POINT, both in colleges of education and local school districts. They see that POINT produces. Its hallmark is quality.

7. Evaluation: Results and Recommendations

Since POINT is an ongoing program, the evaluation process is ongoing as well. Overall, evaluation and results consist of these aspects:

1. Verification through testing, observation, and consultation that POINT students meet the stated objectives of the Elementary Education Department at San Diego State University. In point of fact, the students go far beyond the stated objectives. POINT holds many requirements that go above and beyond those of the department.
2. Continual feedback regarding program and student competencies from professors, students, teachers, and administrators. POINT is continually modified in accord with that feedback.
3. Analyses, by professors and teachers, of the performances, products, and attitudes of POINT students. To date no one has discovered a program that demands more of students nor one in which students perform and produce better.
4. Demand for POINT involvement in schools and school districts. Requests far outnumber the availability of POINT and its students.
5. Demand for POINT student teachers from teachers who know about POINT. Requests far exceed the number of students available.
6. Degree of effect on program development in teacher education at San Diego State University. These effects have been significant. They were listed previously.
7. Percentage of POINT graduates securing teaching positions. The success rate has averaged over 80% for the first six cycles, all in a time of teacher oversupply. This rate is more than double the average in California.

8. Degree of loyalty to the program shown by students. The unusual esprit de corps and lasting attachment of graduates was described previously.
9. Ratio of applicants to vacancies in POINT. POINT does no active recruiting, yet the number of applicants who apply each year exceeds the size of the program.

Recommendations

It is recommended that groups who wish to initiate programs similar to POINT take the following into account:

1. Realize that the team approach to teaching on-site requires more work than the normal college class program.
2. Be sure instructional team members are flexible and can work together harmoniously.
3. Select participating schools and master teachers very carefully. Be sure they understand fully the requirements and schedules of students and classes.
4. Maintain very close frequent contact with teachers and building principals.
5. Be sure students know the program will be very demanding and that they will be in the spotlight.
6. Insist on work of the highest calibre from students. Be prepared to do what you can to facilitate this work and provide encouragement, support, and help.
7. Seek out opportunities for students to display and demonstrate their unusual accomplishments.

8. Show the solidarity, permanence, and tradition of the program by allowing students and ex-students to participate in presentations, exhibitions, recruiting, interviewing, and program evaluation.
9. Allow time as necessary for the group to talk out problems. Insist that they merely state the problem, without backbiting and placing blame, then seek out solutions.
10. Do everything possible to help students feel proud of their program, and at the same time act suitably humble. No one appreciates smart alecks or smart aleck programs. Cultivate pride, honor, and excellence, overlaid with humility.